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REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application and entry of the foregoing amendments are respectfully requested. Applicants initially note with appreciation that the Examiner has withdrawn the rejection of Claims 9, 11 and 12 under 35 USC §101, the rejection of Claims 1, 3 - 9, 11 and 12 under 35 USC §112 second paragraph, and the rejection of Claims 1, 3 - 9, 11-17, 31, 32 and 37-39 under 35 USC §102(a). The Examiner has allowed Claims 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 37-39. In addition, the Examiner indicated that Claims 40-47 would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claims (Advisory Action mailed from the US PTO on March 11, 2004).

In order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have canceled Claims 1, 3-8, 12, 15, 31 and 32, and have submitted Claims 40-47. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the canceled claims in related Continuation or Divisional applications.

CONCLUSION

The present amendments put the application into condition for allowance. Applicants' Attorney respectfully requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation would expedite prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to contact Elizabeth W. Mata at (915) 845-3558 (Mountain Time Zone). If Elizabeth W. Mata cannot be reached, the Examiner is invited to contact Doreen M. Hogle at (978) 341-0036.

Respectfully submitted,

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